

WEST HARTFORD SENIOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COMMISSION

MINUTES

January 19, 2016

Members Present: Noreen Batchelder, Linda Hanson, Robert Kennedy, Ray Guenter, Donna Sterling, Ruth Kurien and Philip Walker
Council Liaison: Shari Cantor
Members Absent: Connie Melo, Ellen Phillips
Staff Present: Kathleen Faroni, Armena Walsh
Staff Absent: Gina Marino
Guests: Kevin Farmer, Mayor Scott Slifka, Beth Kerrigan, Jim Doran
Volunteer Secretary: Linda Hanson, substituting for Amy Silverman

Chairman Philip Walker called the meeting to order at 10:10 AM.

The Minutes of December 15, 2015 were approved unanimously.

Old Business

Both Donna Sterling's and Philip Walker's terms on the Commission end in February 2016. Application for additional terms will be made to the Town Clerk, Essie Labrot.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Walker put forth a proposal to reschedule Commission meetings permanently to 10:00 AM, effective immediately. It was unanimously approved. Many guest speakers are lined up for the coming months: CRT'S Garland Tanksley, West Hartford Chief of Police Tracey Gove, and Senator Beth Bye among them. Mention was also made of the Senior Job Bank Fair in the Town Hall auditorium on January 26th, and an Open House on January 20th at the ECC, sponsored by Eversource. Plans are underway for underground construction of new power lines, which might directly impact the ECC and the New Britain Avenue and South Quaker Lane area.

Transportation

Kevin Farmer reported that their annual appeal is underway, and they are 25% ahead of last year. They are looking for sponsorships from local businesses to broaden their base. They now have 9 board members, 24 volunteer drivers, and are providing more rides than ever.

Staff Reports

Written reports from the Senior Centers will be attached. Kathy Faroni is helping at the WHSC in Gina's absence; everything is fine. The number of hot meals served at the ESC has dropped considerably; the Site Supervisor is working to increase this number.

Human Services

Armena Walsh reported the implementation of a new federal food assistance program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. It is available to persons 60 and over who meet strict income guidelines. The Town's Human Services department is partnering with Foodshare and St.

James Church; approximately 20 people are enrolled. Chairman Walker asked that the interim Manager of Human services, Ed Sanady, consider speaking to the Commission in the near future.

Mayor Scott Slifka

Mayor Slifka complimented the Commission for being pro-active in the community, forward thinking, gathering information and reporting on issues of importance. He thanked Shari Cantor for her presence at our meetings. Regarding the ECC parking lot, it is an issue which needs to be addressed in a myriad of ways, with no one simple answer. The Eversource project will impact the center's parking lot, and the town will have to be financially reimbursed; handrails from the lower parking lot are being considered. Chairman Walker inquired if there are any areas that the Town Council would like the Commission to focus on; Mayor Slifka mentioned Senior Center infrastructure, space and the buildings themselves, and the overall importance of feedback, and what seniors might need in 10 years, doing research and planning accordingly. Shari Cantor mentioned traffic flow at the centers, inadequate handicapped parking, overall transportation, affordable housing options. Regarding the UCONN property, the Town Council approved that the Town Manager can enter into contract negotiations. There is no decision yet with respect to the sale of the property or its ultimate disposition.

Senior Job Bank

Jim Doran gave a progress report. Bill Stachelek, SJB office manager, resigned his position due to health reasons. Bob Cave and Hank Boulton have taken on his tasks temporarily. Jim has assumed the role of head of fund raising on an interim basis. The SJB board will vote on appointing Sheila Diamond as Executive Director, a part-time position. Please see attached document for further information.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Tuesday, February 16, 2016 at 10:00 AM.

The meeting adjourned at Noon.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda Hanson
Substitute Volunteer Secretary